

# The Bialystoker Synagogue

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September 16, 2018

Hon. Jesse Furman  
Thurgood Marshall Courthouse  
40 Foley Square  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Furman:

My name is Rabbi Zvi Romm and I have served as the rabbi of the Bialystoker Synagogue, the largest synagogue in Lower Manhattan, for the past 16 years. I write this letter to ask for leniency in the sentencing of David Carlebach. I came to know David when he lived in our community -- the Lower East Side -- during 2017. At that time he attended our prayer services and classes regularly and I had the chance to often discuss with him matters relating to religious texts as well as the broader community.

I am aware that David has pleaded guilty to committing a crime and I understand, as well, that the law requires accountability. I feel, however, that leniency in applying the sentence is called for.

David is an extremely pleasant, genuine person who became an integral part of our community institutions during the period in which he lived on the Lower East Side. He made an attempt to strengthen prayer services at small synagogues where few worshipers attended. He would encourage people to create the needed prayer quorum at smaller synagogues and served as cantor for daily services and holy days at those synagogues. He frequently would help a wheelchair-bound congregant make his way to services.

David came to local classes and lectures, and shared his erudition by participating in the discussions. (Study and learning are extremely important to David; even while incarcerated, he spent much time poring over books which were sent up to him at Riker's Island.) In one case, he provided significant moral support to a local rabbi who was being treated disrespectfully by a vocal congregant.

David is not a career criminal. My knowledge of the circumstances surrounding his case is not extensive. However, based on the little I do know, my impression of events is that David acted improperly after finding himself financially in over his head. I think he is chastised, and certainly has learned his lesson.

David's legal woes unfold at the same time that his marriage is collapsing. He is very much a broken man. I hope this fact can count towards leniency in sentencing.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Zvi Romm  
Bialystoker Synagogue  
Lower East Side, New York City

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